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near the coast. The highest elevation seen was nearly 4000 feet. The maximum October temperature in Nickol Bay during October was 92°, and the minimum 70°: the heat was not inconveniently felt during the journey. Mr. F. Gregory's map has not yet been completed and forwarded; but the report that has been received, bears evidence to a careful survey of the country examined by him.

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The fourth Paper read was—

4. *Letter from CAPT. CADELL to SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, on the Country to the East and North of the Grey and Stanley Ranges.*

“ I do myself the honour of herewith forwarding a rough tracing of some new ‘ features ’ which are found to exist to the eastward and north-eastward of the Grey and Stanley ranges.

“ The most noticeable feature in the tracing is the Booro Pooro or Gonnewarra, which, from its magnitude, we imagine to be identical with the Neville of Sir Thomas Mitchell. In August last its breadth, twenty miles from Mount Vision, was about 30 yards, with a depth of about 11 feet. It eventually appears to expend itself on the plains. It will now be seen that this region is much better watered than the respected Sturt was led to expect from the natives; and in a few years, when stock shall have trodden down and formed the topsoil, which at present acts but as a sponge to absorb the rains as they fall, it will really be a fairly watered country and decidedly favourable for pastoral purposes. And I should not be surprised to see nature cutting fresh watercourses, notwithstanding that those at present existing are deep and well defined.

“ ‘ Country ’ has been taken up largely both on the Paroo and Warrego. The Grey and Stanley ranges are under tender, and runs have been applied for on and in the neighbourhood of the Gonnewarra. The tracing was made from information I received when on the Darling the other day; and I account for the longitudes not agreeing with those of Wills, as that observer in his maps was very considerably to the eastward of Sturt's positions. When out at the back of the Anna branch a short time ago with my friend Mr. Haverfield, we found that the “ backwaters ” of the Darling had at some time and during great floods extended nearly if not over the South Australian boundary line (141st meridian). Lake Cawndilla overflowing fills Lake Tondour, which in its turn sends its waters

down through a depressed line of flooded country to a lake (or lakes) of vast extent, which have not been filled for many years.

"I may add that all our western flowing rivers seem to carry down uniformly larger volumes of water than they did in former years."

MR. LAUCHLAN MACKINNON having been called upon by the President, said that it was many years ago—as far back, indeed, as 1839—that he was engaged in an expedition into the interior of Australia that might, in a manner, be considered an exploring one, though its main object was of a commercial character. At the time of which he spoke there was nothing so exciting to youthful enterprise in that country as the overland journey from Sydney to the then newly formed colony of South Australia, of which Adelaide was the capital. At that time South Australia had an immense extent of unoccupied pasture-lands of the finest quality ready for the reception of flocks and herds. The first sheep, cattle, and horses had to be imported by sea from England, Tasmania, and New South Wales. The obvious disadvantages of this expensive and tedious mode of stocking the lands of the new colony stimulated the enterprise of Bonny, Hawdon, Eyre, and others, and the result was that a practicable route for stock was discovered, along the Morumbidgee and Murray Rivers, from New South Wales to South Australia. He himself was the leader of one of the earliest parties who traversed that route. The party started from Sydney in the middle of 1839, and arrived in safety at Adelaide in about three months. At that time a great portion of the country was quite unknown. He met large tribes of natives, but he succeeded in passing through them without much difficulty. He, however, found one thing to be necessary in order to carry out the work he had undertaken to a successful issue, and that was, not to separate himself from his commissariat; and he believed that if, in Messrs. Burke and Wills' expedition, the same principle had been adhered to, they would not now have had to mourn over the loss of those gallant men. There was no problem in social science so extraordinary as that which was in process of development in Australia. It was but seventy-four years since the first settlers arrived in Sydney and formed a colony that had since become the parent of other magnificent colonies. On the shores of Port Jackson, where seventy-five years ago the native savages were the only occupants, stood the fine city of Sydney, with an Anglo-Saxon population numbering some 60,000 or 70,000. As late as 1836 the colony of Victoria was a mere run for kangaroos and savages, but now it was the habitation of civilised men. He believed that there were results in that colony which were quite unparalleled in the history of colonisation. It was in the year 1837 that the first land was sold in Victoria. When he arrived in Melbourne, in 1840, its population numbered about 150, while that of the whole district of Port Phillip, as it was then called, did not exceed 3000. Melbourne itself was then but a hamlet in the midst of a forest, yet the energy and enterprise of its inhabitants had rendered it, within the short period that had intervened, one of the finest and most prosperous cities in the world. When he left Melbourne in 1857, just seventeen years after he had first arrived there, its population had risen to 95,000, while that of the whole colony had increased to nearly 600,000. The city itself had become one of extreme beauty from the substantial and tastefully ornamented character of its buildings. The streets were wide and handsome, macadamized in the centres, and paved at the sides with flagging taken out at great cost from the north of Scotland. The entire city was lighted with gas. Works, constructed on the best principles known to modern science, at a cost of 800,000*l.*, supplied the town most abundantly with water. The rapid increase of material prosperity

in Victoria was so remarkable that he could not refrain from giving them a few more statistical facts, which would speak for themselves. When he went to Victoria in 1840, its whole public revenue, from all sources, was about 10,000*l.* a year; the value of its exports was about 70,000*l.* a year: when he left in 1857, its public revenue was 3,330,000*l.* a year, and its exports had reached to nearly 15,000,000*l.* sterling. The greater part of this amount was made up of gold, the produce of the rich mines which abounded in Victoria. But, independently of the gold, the resources of Australia in agriculture and in her flocks and herds had been such as to render these colonies highly prosperous and affluent before the advent of the golden era. As regarded the government of the colonies, there were matters which had not been satisfactory. It was yet to be seen how far democratic institutions were consistent with constitutional government. He trusted that problem would be worked out satisfactorily. As regarded the unfortunate expedition of Burke and Wills, every one must deplore the melancholy fate of the gallant and persevering men. He was glad to see that the countrymen of Wills, in the town of Totness, Devonshire, were about to pay a mark of respect to his memory, by raising a monument; and he hoped that every one who felt an interest in the progress of discovery in Australia would seek an opportunity of adding their mite towards raising a monument to so worthy a man. He considered that before Burke and Wills left Cooper's Creek, they ought to have established a large depôt at that place, to ensure sufficient food upon which they might fall back; but, instead of that, their enthusiasm led them to go ahead of their party, imagining that those they were leaving in charge would be able to reach Cooper's Creek in time, but the sub-leaders were not equal to the task, and hence the melancholy result of that successful, yet disastrous, expedition.

CAPTAIN BAGOT said, they once had the impression that Australia, generally speaking, was a desert—that it was a country presenting but few spots which might be turned to account. This idea which was entertained in England was not surprising, because he could bear witness to the fact that it was held by those living in Australia itself, until the people there became better acquainted with the country. His friend, Mr. Mackinnon, had stated elsewhere that, when taking cattle across the portion of country over which he had travelled, they had to traverse a salt-bush desert. The cattle which were with him even declared it to be a desert, for they would not touch the bush, and many were lost because they had nothing to feed upon. He thought it was two years after Mr. Mackinnon traversed the country that his son went into it. He was travelling until his provision-wallet was exhausted; he was tired and hungry, and had nothing to depend upon but his rifle for subsistence, and he was looking for something which he might deprive of life to preserve his own life; he saw a bullock, shot it, and found it exceedingly fat. After he had feasted upon the animal he had the good sense to examine its stomach, for the purpose of seeing on what food it had become so fat. He opened the stomach, and found nothing but salt-bush in it. His son returned to Adelaide immediately, arranged with the Government for a large tract of land, and he now had on it 7000 or 8000 as fine beasts as could be seen, and they had been all fed upon the salt-bush. His friend, Mr. Eyre, had passed into that country, to the north of Spencer's Gulf, and, on his return, declared that he believed it to be a land which was perfectly useless: yet upon that very country there were now something like 2,000,000 of sheep. It was believed that even the plains of Adelaide were useless brickfields, but upon those plains enough breadstuffs were now raised, not only to feed the population of South Australia, but also to supply a large proportion of the gold-diggers in Victoria. South Australia has for many years exported as much breadstuffs each year as would supply her own con-

sumption for two years. He thought these few facts would serve to show that, whatever may have been the opinions formed on a first cursory glance at it, the land of Australia, as far as it is known, is not a desert; while the recent explorations of Burke and Wills and of Stuart remove the preconceived opinion of the desert condition of the vast interior of that mighty continent.

After some remarks by MR. MARSH, M.P.,

MR. SAUNDERS expressed his belief that the coast of Carpentaria, owing to its peculiar local advantages, would attain to a more flourishing position than any other part of Australia; and he urged the necessity of establishing there a new settlement as a means of creating a very beneficial influence upon commercial operations, especially throughout the adjacent archipelago.

MR. HENRY AYSHFORD SANFORD, on being called on by the Chairman, spoke in reference to the resources of Western Australia, and to the causes of its present inferiority to the other colonies on that continent. He said that the colony was established in 1829, when the Government officials received large tracts of the best land then known in the colony, a great part of which, from want of capital and labour, are still lying untenanted. Again, the land was divided amongst the original colonists in proportion to the cost of the articles—whatever might have been their usefulness—brought by each from home; and in 1830 upwards of 2000 persons, with property amounting to the value of 100,000*l.*, arrived in the colony; but, from the impossibility of apportioning the different tracts of land to the various applicants (there being then but a Surveyor-General and an Assistant-Surveyor in the colony) and from want of labour, the country was not able to be cultivated to any great extent; and at one time the colonists were reduced to nearly a state of starvation. From that time the colony underwent various vicissitudes till 1850, when the introduction of convicts (then rejected by the other Australian colonies) supplied to a certain extent the defects of the want of labour; and the employment of these, under the moral force system (which has been attended with the greatest success), first raised the prospects of the colony. To show the success of the system, in 1859, 21 convictions at the sessions were as follows:—11 free-men, and but 3 conditional-pardon men and 7 ticket-of-leave men, out of a population of about 15,000 souls. A further advance has been made by the new Land Regulations; and he, Mr. Sanford, could state, from his own knowledge, that where, in 1857, scarcely 400 acres were under cultivation, a district not less than 12 miles long by from 2 to 3 miles wide was, in 1861, one succession of corn-fields.

He added that the southern part of the colony produced in large quantities the jarrah wood, most excellent for buildings, railway purposes, &c. &c., being capable of resisting the attacks of the white ant, as also so much esteemed for ships, piles, and all water purposes (resisting the attacks of the *Teredo navalis*), that at this moment it is being imported to England for the purpose of being used in the royal navy yards. Copper and lead ore were found in great abundance, with an extraordinarily rich percentage of ore, within an easy distance of good and safe ports. Coal has also been discovered, and there exists but little doubt that there are extensive coal-fields also within a short distance of the sea. He referred them to the Exhibition of this year, where they would have the opportunity of seeing and testing the accuracy of his statements as to the great natural advantages of the country. He thought that a great part of the meeting were doubtless well aware that to the exploring energy, perseverance, and skill of the Messrs. Gregory the colonists were in a great measure indebted for their knowledge of the agricultural and mineral resources of their adopted country; and the report that had been read that evening of Mr. Frank Gregory's last successful explorations in the north-west opened new and extensive fields to the settlers for the extension of their flocks and herds, and very possibly for the cultivation of the cotton-plant.

Messrs. Dempsters, Clarkson, and Harper had also discovered, 300 miles east of York, large tracts of land, with plenty of water, and well adapted for pastoral purposes; but the principal interest attached to their trip was the intelligence they had obtained of what might prove a clue to the fate of the Leichardt expedition, and he had been informed it was the intention of the Colonial Government to prosecute further inquiries in the ensuing wet season. He believed the colony only required *labour*, and he trusted that Government would persevere in sending out convicts, and, if so, he believed sufficient capital would speedily be introduced to work the mineral and other resources of the country; and Western Australia would yet rank among one of the most prosperous colonies of that wonderful continent.

The meeting was then adjourned to the 24th of February.

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## ADDITIONAL NOTICES.

(Printed by order of Council.)

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1. *Abstract of Capt. Duncan Cameron's Paper on the Ethnology of the Caucasus.* By W. SPOTTISWOODE, Esq.

THE establishment of Cossacks in the Caucasus dates some centuries back, when large bodies of them moved down from their own plains to the Dnieper and the Don, and thence to the Terek, where they formed a mixed race, which, however, has been continually recruited from the Don or the Ukraine. These were systematically augmented by Peter the Great and his successors. Catharine the Great, in particular, transferred thither the turbulent Zaporogue Cossacks. Continually recruited by desperadoes from the surrounding states, they rendered themselves at one time seriously formidable, frequently carrying devastation into Russia and Poland, Turkey and the Crimean Khanships. In 1775 their government was suppressed by Catharine II. They were subsequently allowed to serve against Turkey, and, as a reward for their exploits, they were granted in 1789 the territory which they now occupy on the Black Sea.

The Cossacks of the Caucasian line still retain some vestiges of the self-government which distinguished their rude, free communities. They have no nobles, and acknowledge no difference between families, except distinction gained in the field or military rank. Disposed in regiments along the different military lines, they furnish an imposing complement to the regular army of the Caucasus. Their artillery, with that of the Don Cossacks, is reckoned the best in Russia. Some of their early settlements have become the nuclei of important towns. Thus Kizliar, established in 1715, numbers 9305 inhabitants; Mozdok, established in 1777, 10,970; Stavropol, established the same year, 14,368.

Beyond the Cossacks are the Nogai Tatars, a widely different race, whose history, however, is no less characteristic. At the beginning of the seventeenth century they passed from the Sea of Azov to the north-east of the Caspian, between Tobolsk and the Jaik. Pressed by the Kalmuks, they afterwards submitted to Russian sway, pitching their tents for a time near Astrakhan.